

Seminar on
Decentralisation Processes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: Where do Roma Stand?

EU Accession Monitoring Program (EUMAP), EUROPEUM Institute for European
Policy
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REPORT

1. Background

On 23 June 2003, the EU Accession Monitoring Program (EUMAP), Open Society Institute, Budapest, together with EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, organized a seminar on “*Decentralization Processes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: Where do Roma Stand?*”. The objective of this seminar was to identify the impact of ongoing decentralization and public administration reform in the Czech Republic and Slovakia on Roma policy. Indeed, on the one hand, with the transfer of decision-making authority to lower levels of administration and to self-government, new opportunities are emerging to involve Roma in policy making to a greater extent. At the same time, the reforms could potentially lead to greater marginalisation of Roma communities. Participants at the seminar were encouraged to discuss means of enhancing the participation of Roma in the design and implementation of local policies, and the incorporation of mechanisms needed to do so into the reforms, as well as to identify potential problem areas and the means of addressing them at the earliest possible stage.

The idea for organizing this seminar stemmed from the findings of Volume I of the 2002 EUMAP reports on *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection* which covered the ten EU candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe (available at: <http://www.eumap.org/reports/2002/content/07>).¹ The reports on the Czech Republic and Slovakia found that policies for Roma have in general been developed centrally with little regard to how local actors can be encouraged to take part in their implementation, although the success of these policies is often tested at the local level. Concern that insufficient attention has been paid to the possible impact of public administration reform on Roma policies, for example on Roma Advisors, was raised in particular during the launch of the report on Minority Protection in the Czech Republic in Prague in December 2002. As similar concerns have been raised in Slovakia which is implementing similar reforms, the organizers hoped that a comparative setting would allow for fruitful discussion and enable participants to share experiences.

The one-day seminar organized in Prague on 23 June 2003 brought together about 30 participants from the Czech Republic and Slovakia representing ministries and other central government bodies, regional state administration, as well as local government;

¹ Volume II covered the five largest EU member states: France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

many NGO and Roma representatives were also present. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Warsaw, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office in Prague also sent representatives. The seminar, which was held in an informal roundtable setting, consisted of an introductory panel, followed by three specialized panels on the topics of education policy, employment policy, and the participation of Roma in public life. These three panels sought to examine in greater detail the changes occurring in these policy areas as a result of the reforms and to develop specific policy recommendations.

2. Summary of Discussions

Panel I: Introduction

David Král (EUROPEUM) welcomed the participants and gave the floor to **Rachel Guglielmo** (EUMAP) who in her opening notes highlighted the fact that, as a result of the accession process, most candidate states had adopted special policies and programs to improve the situation of Roma. She also highlighted one of the general findings of the 2002 EUMAP reports on Minority Protection that decentralization reforms have brought opportunities but also challenges. Indeed, on the one hand, decentralization has provided some benefits, local authorities are now closer to the problems of their communities, and as they know the situation better, they are able to develop programs that respond better to the needs of their communities. On the other hand, new problems are also emerging: the central state administration has often insufficiently communicated its policies to local authorities; and because Roma policies sometimes do not have support at the local level, this has been an obstacle. Lack of funding at the local level was another important obstacle. In conclusion, she noted that a delicate balance has to be struck between central guidance and leadership, and local initiatives and responsibility.

This opening intervention was followed by a summary of the findings of the 2002 EUMAP Reports on Minority Protection in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia.² **Barbora Bukovská** (Counseling Center for Citizenship and Human Rights, Prague, and co-author of the 2002 report on Minority Protection in the Czech Republic), noted that while the Czech Concept³ represents a positive step and addresses a broad range of problems, its implementation has been rather *ad hoc*. Furthermore, the necessary legislative framework to support implementation of the Concept is lacking. Also, the bodies responsible for coordinating activities under the Concept do not have a legal basis; their powers are therefore limited. Ms Bukovská called for a greater participation of Roma. Another issue highlighted was that in the Czech Republic that there are very few possibilities for influencing local policies and there are fears that decentralization could make this situation worse. She cited the case of the Roma Advisors at the district level—a position which was abolished along with the districts. It is now up to the regional offices

² See the EUMAP website (www.eumap.org/reports) for the reports in English as well as in the Czech and Slovak translation respectively.

³ *Koncepce politiky vlády vůči příslušníkům romské komunity, napomáhající jejich integraci do společnosti* (Concept of Governmental Policy Towards Members of the Roma Community Supporting Their Integration into Society) (14 June 2000), at: http://racek.vlada.cz/usneseni/usneseni_test.nsf/usneseni/usneseni_test.nsf/2F91A903BC3F30A4C12569660039FA47?opendocument.

to decide whether to hire Roma Advisors and there are no mechanisms to ensure that they do so. Other causes for concern mentioned were: limited funding for projects; lack of broader public support for Roma policies; lack of data and the need to devise means of data collection while respecting privacy.

Farimah Daftary (EUMAP) focused on those findings of the Slovak report which related to implementation at the local level and the question of Roma participation. In particular, she noted that persistent negative attitudes at the local level as well as insufficient funding represented an important obstacle to implementation of the Slovak government's Roma Strategy.⁴ She also mentioned an interesting finding that in the field of employment policy, those initiatives which had seemed to bring the best results were those which had been implemented by the National Labor Offices outside the framework of the government's Roma Strategy. She concluded by saying that, even though issues related to decentralization had perhaps not yet emerged in Slovakia to the same extent as in the Czech Republic where the reforms are more advanced, she believed that it was still interesting to compare the situations in the two countries and exchange experiences, e.g. concerning the status of Roma advisors.

The last two presentations of this session touched upon current issues related to Roma policy making and implementation, with a focus on the impact of decentralization and public administration reforms. **Roman Krištof** (International Organization for Migration, Prague, and former Deputy Chair of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Romani Community Affairs in Prague), opened with a comment on the difficulty of monitoring, stressing the need to clarify terms such as "Roma community" and to develop means of overcoming the lack of data and legal obstacles represented by privacy laws. He was not optimistic, however, that positive changes would come soon. Another issue highlighted was that central organs of state administration have no specific means to influence local self-governments/mayors in the Czech Republic. Mr Krištof then focused on the so-called "Roma Advisors" in the Czech Republic and their status following the reform of public administration: this was an open issue until the very end, and a decision was made following the abolishment of the (ca. 80) districts to delegate responsibility for Roma Advisors to the local communities, of which there are 205. Thus, there are now more such Roma Advisors (or rather, "post advisors"), who cumulate a number of functions (also drugs, sports, youth issues, etc), with the aim of coordinating implementation at the local level. As regards the new position of Roma Regional Coordinators, all 14 positions have now been filled (one for each of the 14 regions). Mr Krištof also noted interesting developments in some regions (e.g. Hradec Králové, Karlovy Vary) where a regional concept of integration policy is emerging including other minority groups and even foreigners, an approach which differs from state policy at the national level. Mr Krištof also addressed the difficulties of reconciling policies aiming at Roma emancipation, such

⁴ *Stratégia vlády Slovenskej republiky na riešenie problémov rómskej národnostnej menšiny a súbor opatrení na jej realizáciu - I. etapa* (Strategy of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Solution of the Problems of the Roma National Minority and the Set of Measures for Its Implementation – Stage I) (27 September 1999); and *Rozpracovaná stratégia vlády SR na riešenie problémov rómskej národnostnej menšiny do súboru konkrétnych opatrení na rok 2000 - II. Etapa* (Elaboration of the Government Strategy for Addressing Problems of the Romani National Minority into a Package of Concrete Measures for the Year 2000 – Stage II) (3 May 2000), both at: <http://www.vlada.sk/>.

as the Czech government's 2000 Concept, with efforts to fight social exclusion (social approach). He also emphasized that one cannot speak of a homogenous Roma community, and that different segments of the Roma community do not always communicate with one another. In conclusion, he warned that there is at present a lack of instruments in the Czech Republic to enforce the rights of Roma at local level, as exemplified by the case regarding the wall in Matice street (Ústí nad Labem): the Constitutional Court finally ruled in favor of the complainant, i.e. the municipality of Ústí nad Labem. Mr Křištof informed the participants of several proposals to establish an "agency" to be established with the participation of the central state, with funding from European social funds. This would enable to overcome the fact that currently all initiatives aimed at Roma are taken in a vertical fashion by individual ministries who do not communicate with one another. He also criticized the emergence of a "Roma industry" composed of academics with little contact with reality and entrepreneurs creating "ethnobusiness". Rather, funds should be distributed in a transparent fashion.

Michal Šebesta (Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for the Roma Communities) agreed with the findings of the 2002 EUMAP report on Slovakia and those highlighted by the EU, such as problems related to the reform of state administration and segregation. He acknowledged that the situation has worsened due to the reduction of competencies of local self-governments which has negatively affected relations with Roma communities in Slovakia. He pointed to the paradox as reform of state administration aims to enable greater participation of local government but can also have negative effects. Mr Šebesta also cited the findings of a 2001 World Bank survey which revealed strong latent racism amongst newly-elected mayors. Until 1998, the Slovak government had encouraged mayors to resolve Roma issues at the district level; however, many of those who sought to deal with Roma issues were not re-elected, not having managed to convince the majority population that such measures were necessary. Now, following the local elections (December 2002), the number of Roma candidates and elected Roma mayors has increased. Another issue raised was that of the complexity of implementation of government policy at the local level. The 2002 Priorities⁵ included the improvement of the situation in Roma settlements, based on the government's realization that successful implementation very much depends on a cooperative attitude of mayors and local councils (e.g. in the case of support for social housing development where state subsidies are available for social housing construction but are not being used by mayors). He also stressed that the majority society needs to be involved as well in order for Roma policies to be successful.

Ivan Veselý (Dženo, Prague) made the following recommendations on how to promote Roma emancipation :

- "Roma schools" rather than preparatory classes and teachers' assistants; looking to models such as Waldorf schools which are more adapted to Roma;
- minority self-governments rather than ineffective attempts of the state to influence the often strongly discriminatory actions of municipalities;

⁵ *Priority vlády SR vo vzťahu k rómskym komunitám na rok 2002* (Priorities of the Government of the Slovak Republic with regard to Roma Communities for 2002) (10 April 2002), at: <http://www.vlada.sk/>.

- instead of funding various Roma advisory bodies, coordinator, Roma advisors and teachers' assistants, create the necessary legislative basis and ensure a democratic selection of truly representative Roma bodies which can act as partners rather than subordinates of majority institutions;
- consistently prosecute all manifestations of discrimination and illegal practices through penal sanctions and property confiscation;
- transfer flats and houses to the tenants or minority self-governments, writing-off of debts by the state.

In the ensuing *discussion*, the following comments were made:

- One participant noted that the position of Roma Advisor was created in 1997 in response to the fact that Roma were leaving the Czech Republic, and that Czech government policy towards Roma was regressing to that exercised in pre-1989 times. He emphasized that a comprehensive approach is needed in order to resolve the Roma issue which is not a social issue exclusively.
- Another participant stated, however, that it was necessary to highlight social aspects, at least in Slovakia, stressing the key role of education.
- It was also emphasized that, while monitoring reports such as the one produced by OSI, were positive initiatives, Roma themselves should write these monitoring reports and be involved in administering their own affairs.

Panel II: Education Policies

The aim of this panel was to discuss the impact of decentralization reforms on Roma education policy, new (or planned) competencies of regional and local government in the sphere of education, and to draw some lessons learned from the implementation by NGOs of projects in the sphere of education and develop recommendations for the improvement of the effectiveness of Roma education policy.

Peter Gábor (Wide Open School Foundation, Žiar nad Hronom, Slovakia) presented the work of his organization which is devoted to the education of Roma children, mainly through the training of Roma assistants and by helping Roma who have not completed their high school education prepare for the graduation exam. Mr Gábor submitted the following *recommendations*:

1. Increase the motivation of Roma children and encourage them to attend recreational centers offering extra-curricular activities during their leisure time. The Wide Open School Foundation has opened a few such centers within the context of the Step-by-Step Program and would like to see them expanded to all settlements.
2. Improve the quality of education by addressing the current lack of a systematic approach to the issue of education which is being complemented by NGO initiatives.
3. Address the issue of relations between teachers and pupils and teachers' negative attitudes towards Roma children as well as discrimination.
4. Establish a European centre to deal with the education of Roma children and youth with the task of creating the conditions for the education of Roma children; cooperate with state administration from preparatory classes until the university level; carry out education surveys, needs analysis, monitoring, etc.

5. Create a special fund to finance objectives in the area of education, with a transparent allocation of funds.

Other participants from Slovakia raised the following issues in the *discussion*:

- *Segregation*: Several participants noted that Slovak elementary schools are very racist and “Roma schools” with low standards have been created. Another participant agreed that Roma schools would continue to exist in the future as long as the settlements persist. However, one participant expressed the opinion that “Roma schools” were not necessarily a bad thing, as long as the teachers were good, and that there would always be parents who would prefer to send their children to schools attended by Roma. But another participant strongly disagreed, stating that he would never send his child to a segregated school. It was also stated that the Roma have not segregated themselves out of choice and that, as Slovakia prepares to enter the EU, it should ask itself to what extent is it ready as a state and what still needs to be done.
- *The role of NGOs*: One participant noted that, while NGOs are trying to help, the state must take action and adopt systemic steps concerning Roma education and create the appropriate legal framework; *then* NGOs should become involved in implementing the measures. Unfortunately, it is the opposite which is happening. A representative from the National Labor Office agreed that NGOs and activists were substituting for the government, highlighting that the main problem is a lack of financial resources. He noted that his institution had been involved in training Roma assistants in cooperation with the NGO “Association of Young Roma” and the Wide Open School Foundation. Their experience has been mostly positive, although there have been reports of cases where teachers did not allow them to do anything. He welcomed the fact that the position of Roma assistant is defined in the new School Law and that funds for hiring them have been provided by the Ministry of Education. Roma assistants will be remunerated through the National Labour Office. He also noted, in response to an earlier comment, that while some mayors were indeed racists, others had undertaken positive steps and that one cannot generalize.
- Exceptional measures are needed but instead the government is trying to hush up the issue. EU funds are needed as the Slovak government does not have the necessary resources. Another participant stressed the need to implement the adopted government resolutions rather than try to develop new measures.
- One participant noted that the Slovak education system was inherited from the communist era, highlighting the need to find means so that Roma children can be successful, for example by addressing the prejudices of teachers towards Roma children, and by developing a minority education system. He also noted that the basic needs of people should be satisfied before they can think of issues such as education.
- The problem of lack of motivation for Roma children to complete their education given the difficulty of obtaining a job afterwards was also raised by one participant who called for the Slovak government to enact measures to support Roma on the labor market and to address the strong discrimination faced by Roma in this area.
- The need to standardize the Romani language so that it can be used in the education system was also raised.

Mr Vaclav Šneberger (Director of the Step-by-Step Programme, Czech Republic) pointed to the fact that 90% of Roma education projects in the Czech Republic were being implemented by NGOs, and that the Czech government has not acquired any know-how and is merely signing documents which it is unable to implement. He also agreed that the central government cannot influence developments at the regional level. In addition, the transfer of competencies to the regions means that NGOs such as the Wide Open School Foundation cannot influence Roma education policy. Another problem is the lack of communication between ministries and regional authorities as well as between Roma representatives and regional authorities. He also identified the fundamental problem that, currently most projects are *ad hoc* and that, after EU accession, 70% of NGOs at the local level will disappear due to lack of funds and Roma NGOs will not be able to obtain EU structural funds as NGOs have not learned how to apply for grants or to do fundraising.

Mr Šneberger had the following *recommendations*:

1. At the national level: the Czech Minister of Education should openly express political will that she will offer quality education to all children, including Roma. There is a lack of political will and Czech politicians should stop worrying about what voters will think.
2. At the regional level: strategic thinking is needed; regional offices should formulate a comprehensive educational policy so that Roma children complete basic education, teachers are trained, and quality working environments can be provided for them. The quality of schools should be assessed and the directors and teachers of those schools which do not fulfill requirements should be fired.
3. At the school level: each school director should think about the fact that if 90% of graduates end up on unemployment benefits, then a successful education has not been provided; they should think of how children can be more successful on the labor market and cooperate with Roma NGOs; Roma teachers also need know-how so that they can be quality teachers.
4. At the school level: enact support mechanisms so that children do not avoid school. Teachers need to be trained, e.g. in tutoring, peer mentoring, photos of important Roma personalities, etc. Roma leaders should encourage parents to choose the best schools, and emphasize that they have the right to choose quality education for their children. It is up to parents, not to the government, to decide at which school a child should be educated.

During the *discussion*, the following issues were highlighted by Czech participants:

- Roma pupils from ghettos need help with schoolwork as their parents are illiterate.
- All teachers should be required to have concrete experience in working with Roma children and get to know one Roma family as part of their training so that they understand them better.
- Pedagogical training to work with Roma children should not be part of training to work with students with special needs, as is currently the case at the pedagogical institute in Prague; rather, all those training to become teachers should be trained to work with minorities.
- Self-governments should realize that if they do not contribute to implementation of the Government Concept, they will face even worse problems in the long-term.

- For initiatives in the field of education to be successful, they need to be implemented within the context of a broader affirmative action policy, but this is a taboo topic in the Czech Republic. Roma are not motivated to attend school because they have no guarantee of finding a job.
- There is a general need to reform Czech schools which are too conservative.
- Roma self-governments should be established in the Czech Republic as partners of local self-governments, so that they can influence decision-making and resolve the issue of Roma education.
- Roma must be given legal guarantees so that they are not afraid to declare their ethnicity.

Panel III: Employment Policies

The aim of this panel was to gain an overview of planned reforms and current state of implementation in the sphere of employment, to clarify responsibilities for Roma employment policies, to assess concrete initiatives to promote the employment of Roma, and to develop recommendations on improving the effectiveness of employment policies for Roma with a focus on influencing local policies/authorities

Maria Kokardová and **Anna Slotová** (Košice Regional Self-Government, Slovakia) presented the EU PHARE-funded initiatives of the Košice regional self-government to promote the education and employment of Roma since January 2002. A number of these initiatives have been implemented since October 1999 as part of a regional program for the development of Eastern Slovakia. They stressed that a main long-term priority should be the implementation of the National Programme for Education. They made the following *recommendations*:

1. Resolve the financial and legal issues connected to the Programme of Field Social Workers and Roma Teachers' Assistants.
2. Establish a scholarship fund for Roma at the secondary and university levels.
3. In the social sphere introduce a Program of Temporary Compensatory Measures aimed at creating employment opportunities for members of the Roma minority.
4. Introduce new specializations at secondary schools for teachers' assistants, social and missionary work among Roma, and other positions according to demand on the labor market.
5. Establish the position of Roma Advisor at regional level (Košice Regional Self-Government already employs a Roma activist for youth work within the department of regional development).

During the *discussion*, the following issues were raised:

- On whether there is cooperation between Košice and other regional self-governments in Slovakia, the participants were informed that Košice cooperates with the Prešov region; however, the activities of Košice regional self-government were started on 1 January 2002 only so the cooperation is fairly recent.
- It is difficult to coordinate the policies of Košice regional self-government with national policy; regional policy can be blocked by central authorities if they disagree, notably in the field of schools.

- The need to have Roma proportionally represented in self-governments and have them participate in regional development was also emphasized.

According to **Jozef Kollár** (Slovak National Labor Office), the majority of projects for Roma employment are being realized by the national labour offices, e.g. requalification, self-employment and motivational projects. He pointed notably to the great disparities between Slovak regions in terms of unemployment, with the situation getting worse the further east one goes. He stressed the need to pay more attention to regional development which is lagging behind in Slovakia. Mr Kollár spoke about the difficulties of involving public administration in creating effective projects for addressing Roma unemployment. A commission has finally been established by the Slovak Ministry of Labor but it is not very effective as it does not have a single Roma member. This also highlights the lack of cooperation between the government and Roma associations. Mr Kollár also noted that, the National Labor Office is a public institution with an independent budget and management; however, following a government decision and pending approval by parliament, it will come under state administration as of 1 January 2004.

Jozef Chomanic (Civic Association for the Support and Development of Regions, Prešov, Slovakia) spoke about what makes an employment project successful, notably a good knowledge of the region; knowledge of the people; and cooperation with Roma NGOs in the selection of participants for requalification courses. He also regretted the fact that the Slovak state is reducing its contribution to the employment fund. Another obstacle identified was that many districts do not want to resolve the issue of Roma employment and are blocking implementation of the Government Strategy. He also pointed to the difficulty of enacting special measures for Roma while respecting the principle of equality, even though not everyone is coming from the same starting point.

Anton Hrabovský (Chief Advisor, Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities) stated that the main reasons for Roma unemployment were lack of education; lack of qualifications and skills; and the fact that Roma are a “visible minority” (discrimination). He noted that in 95% of Roma settlements, the unemployment rate is nearly 100%, and that there is a great percentage of unemployed persons with higher education and secondary education. Fourteen years after the 1989 revolution, an entire generation has grown up in conditions where parents do not go to work, and live on social assistance. These children have understandably lost their motivation. He informed the participants that the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities is establishing a fund to be administered by the government to provide stipends for Roma children to attend school and university. He also stressed the need for Roma to better formulate their needs through their representatives.

In the *discussion*:

- One participant underlined the important role played by NGOs (both Roma and non-Roma), stating that NGO-municipality and NGO-region relations were relatively good. She also expressed the hope that more funding would become available for a pilot project to train Roma as health assistants.

- Another participant emphasized that giving Roma an equal opportunity in education is both a national and local responsibility, and that the task of punishing an employer who is discriminating against a person because of ethnicity is also a national as well as local responsibility. On the same topic, another participant pointed to the insufficient broader legal framework for addressing discrimination in employment and lack of a system of sanctions. The State should be able to enforce its policies also through extra-judicial means. However, there is insufficient political will and training to address discrimination.

The following *recommendations* were made during this session:

1. Improve the level of cooperation between the National Labor Offices and Roma NGOs, e.g. in the selection of participants for requalification courses to make them more effective.
2. A 1993 proposal to establish a “Roma bank” was also recalled.

Panel IV: Participation in Public Life

This panel examined the key issue of promoting the participation of Roma in public life, and in the design, implementation and assessment of policies affecting Roma communities. A special emphasis was placed on the Roma Advisors and their changing role and status as a result of current reforms.

Jiří Daniel (Roma Regional Coordinator, Southern Moravia, Czech Republic) spoke about his work, noting that it is more complex than that of the Roma Advisor due to the fact that they Roma Regional Coordinators are responsible not only for the Roma Advisors in their region but also for coordinating the activities of teacher’s assistants, field social workers, NGOs, social workers at municipal offices, teachers and police work concerning Roma. He presented the following *recommendations*:

1. Entrench the position of Roma Advisor at the self-government level in the law on localities.
2. Streamline the work of pedagogical assistants and offer them a contract for an unlimited period.
3. Establish a program to support Roma students in higher education
4. Introduce Roma Advisors in other ministries, not only Interior, Labor and Social Affairs, e.g. also in the Ministries of Justice, Culture, Health, and also at the School Inspection Office, etc.
5. Create advisory bodies consisting of Roma for regional governors (“Hejtmans”) and mayors.

Mr. Daniel noted that new national minority committees have been created at the regional level, but these are composed of representatives of the region rather than minorities acting as minority representatives. He also stressed that employment projects should not be managed by Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs but rather by regional offices who would coordinate with National Labor Offices and NGOs. He also spoke about the field social workers which he believes are a form of participation of Roma in public life, noting that local majority communities need to understand why such field social workers are needed. He also stressed the need for better training for field social workers, not only

by NGOs but with the involvement of state administration so that they can handle technical issues better.

Petr Pollak (Roma Advisor, Spišská Nová Ves, Slovakia) presented the situation of Roma Advisors in Slovakia where there are three at the regional level. In Košice and in Prešov they have cumulated functions, and do not deal with Roma issues only. Mr Pollak is the only district adviser, but his position will be abolished as of 1 January 2004. He emphasized that if Roma do not participate in public life then these issues will only get worse. He welcomed the fact that a large number of Roma were elected at the local level following the local elections but lack of education is a problem.

During the *discussion*:

- In response to a question concerning what international organizations can do, it was suggested that international organizations train decision-makers to listen to their communities and that they support projects to train Roma in connection with local elections.
- The need to support Roma to participate in public administration and to take part in local politics was also emphasized by several participants. It was suggested that NGO representatives could train a group of leaders on how to mobilize Roma to vote. The need to work with local decision-makers was also highlighted.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, the participants agreed that a short report incorporating the recommendations which had been presented during the seminar should be prepared and circulated amongst the participants but also with a view to reaching those who had been unable to attend, as well as more broadly to Ministry representatives and other relevant government representatives in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia.

EUMAP, Budapest, 21 July 2003